

THE IMAGE OF GOD AS HOLY SPIRIT

A Professional Project
Presented to the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

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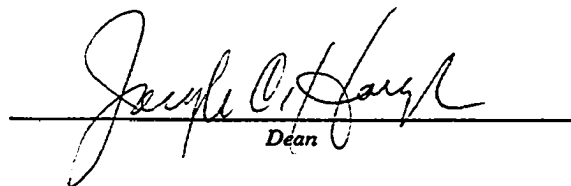

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ABSTRACT

In our society of observers images are explicitly perceived rather than conceptualized, and so our use of images in the Church needs to be flexible so as not to be dogmatic in our approach to God.

According to a recent Gallup Poll there may be a comeback of church-going in the 1980's if churches heed the advice of research and the unchurched population, as well as looking closely at history.

The unchurched population as well as the churched have a potpourri of images from which to view and to listen, to develop a personal and collective image of God, including movies, record albums and television. The importance of song has recently been underated as far as mainline churches are concerned.

The theology of the Spirit, a primary as well as historical image of God, is being studied more in seminary than in the recent past, and this is having an effect on the seminary student. This will very likely affect the church of the future.

According to this survey there appears to be racism and sexism in the Church, and racism is observed in both the church and seminary but not in the unchurched population.

The conclusion as a result of the survey findings is that the Church needs to be aware of its images of God and to determine in what direction it seeks to then move to use the image of God in a way that accomplishes this.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of purpose

A sampling of three populations with regard to use of God images in corporate worship and/or private prayer was made with the use of a questionnaire.

This project originated from the conjunction between a personal conviction of the primacy of the concept of God as Spirit as a result of my own religious experience and theological reflection, and a profound concern with the apparent correlation between church attendance, racism and sexism.

It seemed to be a possibility that the image of God of the church and unchurched might be different, especially in light of a decline in church attendance and membership. There is also an interest in the image of God that the theological student has since they are the coming leadership in the church. It might indicate a change in trend if the church and unchurched surveyed have differing images of God.

Statement of the problem

It is an observation of this writer that a problem appears to exist in our society with the absence of a clear idea of God, and thus the quality of worship and the way in which we communicate with God is affected.

One specific problem this project addresses as a

result of this survey is that the "master" image of God, such as Almighty Lord or Father seems to support hierarchical, sexist and racist assumptions in our culture.

The importance of images in religious experience

This project deals with some of the images of God that are portrayed through the church and through the use of music and theology both in the institutional church and outside of it also.

Because of the findings of this survey the image of the Spirit of God is particularly emphasized. The beginnings of the spirit image in the Bible and its development are discussed.

This project utilizes emperical approaches in order to sharpen the problem definition. It includes a questionnaire given to seminarians, churchd, and unchurched populations in order to determine the primacy of the concept of God as Spirit, or traditional images, within each population.

Definitions In this paper, conception of the image of God will be used as an abstract idea, while perception of God will reflect images observed by the senses, primarily the senses of sight and hearing.

A concept in this paper is an abstract idea or image, compared to a percept as an observed image. 1

¹
William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, A Study in Human Nature (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1917), pp. 53-57.

Racism in this paper is defined as both the conception and perception of a particular race as being superior on no other grounds except those racial traits.

Sexism occurs through both conceptual and perceptual notions when one sex is considered to be superior on no other grounds except whether one is male or female.

Symbols in this paper are defined as systems of representations which convey abstract concepts even when explanations are given for the concepts. When realistic pictures are made of concepts then they become percepts or representations of the idea, object or person itself.

Images In 1985, we live in a world of media-produced images, on TV, billboards and picture-studded magazines and newspapers. The picture of an idea or image is becoming "the" way to communicate the image, rather than by words written or by speech. "A picture speaks a thousand words," seems to have become the rule of the eighties. Images have become very important; their message is more important than ever before, since images are no longer abstractions of our individual minds but, rather, explicit pictures that minutely define images.

There is now a Bible in cartoon form to encourage children (and some adults) to read the Bible. The ideas are portrayed in a way that is easier for our visually adapted minds to grasp.

"Hit" songs, as a sub-category of popular songs are

now difficult to sell without the video short that accompany them. The album cover art has also become increasingly important to sales. The images of poetry of the song are presented visually rather than depending upon the imagination of the listener to interpret the metaphors and stories.

Such images are more simply appropriated by our minds into our belief systems than are implicitly portrayed images. Images that have been presented in an explicit way are difficult to alter; they ask to be either accepted or rejected. If an image is presented frequently enough and for an extended period of time, it becomes reality by virtue of its tenure in our lives, much more so than the presence of abstract images originating in our own minds.

The church has always used symbols to portray ideas and beliefs. Symbols are abstractions. Although abstract, symbols may convey their meaning to typical worshipers when they are visualized or heard, however, when they are presented with interpretation, they add meaning and enrich religious experience. Symbols remain to be abstractions unless explicitly demonstrated, whereupon they then become a representation of the fact or object itself.

The Bible is a good example of symbolic literature because it uses metaphors and symbols in every book. God is pictured as a warrior, as a mountain, as a force, as a spirit and with many other metaphors. Christ is symbolized as a lamb, and a shepherd, among many. The Hebrews were a

metaphorical people, a story-telling people, and the Bible possibly developed around a campfire of a semi-nomadic people entertaining themselves and at the same time passing on their history as a people. An unknown person has said that while many civilizations have left their architecture as a mark of their history, the Hebrews have left the Bible as a monument of the history of that people.

Methodology

Gallup poll: Religion in America Gallup Poll material will be presented to give an empirical indication of current problems and trends. A finding of great interest is the trend away from social action and toward what many have called spirituality, both within the institution of the church and outside of it.

A second finding of the Gallup Poll is the presence of a very large unchurched population that is only slightly less religious, in spiritual terms, than the church population.

The religious scene in the United States has not been researched to a great extent and so religious leaders tend to go on "hunches" about what needs to be addressed and strategies that can be developed to revitalize the institution of the church in this country.

Questionnaire A questionnaire was developed to identify the participant, to determine the presence or absence of a spirituality in life, and to identify images of

God. These questionnaires were given to populations of United Methodists in churches in southern California, to unchurched persons in southern California and to students of the School of Theology at Claremont. All participants were volunteers.

Limitations of the project This project has limits of the situation of images of God as it is found in the United Methodist Church in southern California, unchurched persons in southern California and seminarians at the School of Theology at Claremont.

The sampling contains a majority of women for both churched and unchurched populations and a majority of men for the seminary population. There was a smaller sample for the unchurched than for the other two groups. Nevertheless, within the limits of the populations studied and the limited range of questions, there can be relevant findings.

In the questionnaire there were several questions concerning a description of the participant. There were some questions concerning prayer or the image of God which proved to be inconclusive or irrelevant, therefore the questions were selected that showed a consistency within a population and demonstrated a definite majority of participants within a population to have a common or similar answer.

God as Spirit as described by three theologians God as Spirit was chosen for a theological discussion as a result of the findings of the survey. The survey indicated

that a majority of persons of each of the three populations studied preferred to some measure to relate to God as Spirit.

Lampe, a British theologian, is discussed primarily to give a history of the development of God as Spirit, and as the development of the Trinity in terms of the Bible and church history.

Moltmann and Pittenger's ideas concerning the nature of the Spirit of God are compared because they have two views of systematic theology. Pittenger is a process theologian and an Anglican while Moltmann is a German systematic theologian who has written more about Jesus and the suffering of the cross than about the Spirit. Their views differ significantly while emphasizing the importance of the Spirit. More detailed information on this comparative study and history is found in Chapter IV.

Popular expressions of God God is portrayed in many media in our everyday life other than in the institution of the church. The way in which unchurched people who are spiritually inclined find satisfaction and possible growth may be primarily in the music that punctuates our life from occasions of birth to death in this society.

The institution of the church seems to have declined in its response to participation in music and change in music. This has an effect on the churches and the churchgoers, and it may be affecting church attendance and membership.

This subject is discussed in Chapter V.

The paper concludes with recommendations from this writer's conclusions from the results of the survey.

CHAPTER II

GALLUP POLL: RELIGION IN AMERICA

The Gallup Poll information confirms that there is a large unchurched population that is nevertheless, spiritually or religiously oriented. This is relevant to the results of the questionnaire in this paper and similar in the findings in the cases where the questions are similar.

The Gallup Poll utilizes a very large population which indicates that there is the possibility for bringing unchurched people into the institution of the church if the research results are studied and a strategy is developed from the findings.

Religion in America is a Gallup Poll conducted in 1976 and 1977 but published a year later so that the results are written to reflect the very last years of the decade of the 1970's.

The design of the poll is to be representative of the adult population of the United States with a minimum sample of 1500 persons. Samples of 1500 have an error tolerance of approximately 3%, 95% of the time. 1

It is noted by Gallup and Poling that in the decade of the 70's, the religious intensity reached a frenzy, as

¹
George Gallup, Jr, and David Poling, The Search for America's Faith (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), pp. 8-9.

happens periodically in history. 1 The concerns of the decay of religion, as experienced in the mainline churches, and their seeming lack of ability to reach the soul and to meet the spiritual needs of the people is growing and deserves to be addressed. The Gallup Poll of the 1970's attempted to do this.

The key question this poll sought to answer was whether the churches and synagogues of the United States could satisfy the spiritual needs of the public.

It appears that since the decade of the sixties, when civil rights and the war in Vietnam occupied the minds of people and social action became a religion of sorts, people have been searching for "something" to fill the spiritual void left by the end of the excitement due to the decline of the civil rights movement and the end to the war in Vietnam.

There has been an increase, since the decade of the sixties, in the number of new clergy. Perhaps this indicates a commitment to the mainline church and possibly a dedication to renew its relevance to the people.

According to Gallup, "In fact, the middle 1970's could perhaps be described as a period of 'spiritual adolescence': While spiritually immature in certain key respects, Americans at the same time appear to be searching hard - perhaps harder than ever before - for the deeper

1
Tom Reinken, ed., Religion in America, The Gallup Index, 1977-78 (Princeton, N.J.: American Institute of Public Opinion, 1973), p. x.

meanings of life." 1

It is a time now when most families in this country have a Bible in their homes, but few read it or have even basic knowledge of scripture or history and tradition of the Church.

In 1952 there were six percent of those polled who said that they had no religious training as a child. In 1965 there were nine percent who answered that they had had none, and in 1978 there were 17% who answered that they had had no religious training as a child. 2

It would seem from these statistics that fewer people are interested in the spiritual aspect of their lives and its development. However, just the opposite is true. "A 58% majority says that its beliefs are 'very important' while another 28% call them 'fairly important.' Only nine percent say that their religious beliefs are 'not too important,' and merely four percent consider them of 'no importance.'" 3

It became evident to the pollsters early in their study that there was a great number of people who were very deeply religious but unchurched. Unchurched persons are described by the Gallup study as those persons who had not attended worship services for six months, and special occasions such as a wedding, etc., were not included. The unchurched population contains a great number of persons who

¹
Reinken, p. 3.

²
Gallup and Poling, last page.

³
Reinken, p. 12.

are disillusioned with the institutional church. Forty-one percent of the adult population in North America are unchurched; this is 61 million persons. These are people who are eighteen and over. 1

Of the Protestants, the profile of the unchurched person is most likely to be a white male who has some college education, lives in the West, is under 30 years of age and makes \$20,000 or more in income per year at manual labor. He is politically an Independent and resides in a city over one million in population. He is divorced or separated and probably has western European heritage. 2

Nevertheless, since the Gallup Poll has been taken, surveying church attendance for twenty years, there was an increase in church attendance in the year 1976, and it has steadily increased and in 1978 was 42%. 3 This translates to 59% of the adult population or 89 million people. 4

The conclusion is that while there seems to be a disillusionment with the mainline church, a great number of people are attending and perhaps are trying to change it, while an even greater number of people are those with "faith but without fellowship." 5

It is because of this phenomenon that theology needs

¹ Gallup and Poling, p. 80. ² Reinken, p. 26.
³ Reinken, p. 24. ⁴ Gallup and Poling, p. 81.
⁵ Gallup and Poling, p. 79.

to be examined from the perspective of what the needs of the people are, so as to meet the spiritual hunger of the church and the unchurched.

"A significant result of the survey information is the finding that there is nationwide acceptance of traditional values. While historians may tag the 1960's and the 1970's as the decades of revolt, protest, and disillusionment, the 1980's are already cited as a return to 'normalcy.'" ¹

The 1960's have also been tagged as the era of social change, the 1970's as the "me" decade and the 1980's as the "we" decade. If this is true, it indicates that there is growth in social and spiritual awareness.

It has been found that more people are interested in exploring religious, spiritual or mystical experiences. Thirty-one percent answered affirmatively that they have had a religious or mystical experience - that is, a moment of sudden religious insight or awakening. Ten percent described an "otherworldly experience;" five percent, a "healing experience;" four percent, "visions, voices, dreams;" two percent, "turning to God;" five percent could not describe the experience. ²

To many this could indicate an important personal conception of God and how they relate to God could be helpful

¹

Gallup and Poling, p. 81.

²

Reinken, p. 54.

experience with God, and the church-goers had this experience only slightly more often than non-church goers. 1 This indicates further that there is a sizeable group of faithful without fellowship. Determining their perception and/or how they relate to God could be helpful to the church and to the pastor in evangelization efforts.

At the time of the Gallup and Poling research, those polled who stated that institutional religion is losing influence was equal to those who stated that it was gaining influence. Sixty-four percent of those polled stated that that they had a great deal of confidence in the church. 2 These two findings might seem contradictory, however, the first statement concerns what those polled view as happening while the second is that they themselves have confidence in the church even though the public as a whole might not have the same confidence.

Of the eight institutions in the United States that were included in the survey's questions, the church ranks at or near the top in terms of how much confidence Americans place in them. 3

If this trend of confidence in the institution of the Church continues, it is possible that it will gain in viability for people in our society and efficacy in serving them.

¹
Reinken, p. 54.

²
Reinken, pp. 10, 13.

³
Reinken, p. 11.

While many in the United States are skeptical of the institutional church, there has been found no replacement for the ancient traditions of the Church. Confidence, particularly in the clergy, has waned, in public opinion. Forty percent of the teenage population polled regarded the personal ethical standards of clergy as "only average," "low," or "very low." ¹

This very large and comprehensive poll of the United States indicates that there is certainly hope for the institution of the church in this country.

The image of clergy is low, but the personal spirituality expressed is high among the unchurched population.

Outmoded, but traditional methods of the church remain. However, the boom in numbers of clergy in mainline churches since the 1960's may indicate a renewed commitment to the mainline church and possibly a dedication to renew its relevance to the people, both churched and unchurched. The increased numbers of clergy incredibly have appeared in the face of a decreased membership in mainline churches.

The key question this poll sought to answer was whether the churches and synagogues of the United States could satisfy the spiritual needs of the public. The answer is, yes, if the religious institutions are ready and able to meet the needs that the unchurched population expresses.

¹
Reinken, p. 4.

CHAPTER III

QUESTIONNAIRE

Explanation and rationale

This questionnaire was developed to be used by members of United Methodist Churches in southern California, by seminary students from the School of Theology at Claremont, and by unchurched persons of various denominational backgrounds as well as those with no religious connection, at all, or with other religions, such as Eastern religions.

A broad base of options for each question was necessary to include these diverse groups without too many "other" responses.

The first eleven questions deal with classification of the groups of participants. These questions were included to define the populations, especially in comparison to other surveys and research in the field of church growth and development and religion, in general, as the Gallup Poll has done.

Question number three attempts to define an unchurched person. Some persons are unlikely to classify themselves as unchurched. Therefore, another method was needed so that a distinction could be made between the churched and the unchurched persons. In this study, numbers one, two and three indicate a churched person.

Persons who were not United Methodist members and

were judged to be church members were eliminated from the survey results.

For the unchurched population, Number five, concerning religious affiliation, is important to this survey, since the church members population is specific for the United Methodist Church. The unchurched population, however, retains the possibilities of any or no church affiliation as long as church attendance is not maintained.

Concerning race or ethnic origin, Number six, is included for possible correlations of attitudes or practices that may be relevant and consistent for that particular group. The major ethnic groups for this southern California area are listed so that the use of "other" will be minimized.

Educational level, Number seven; Household Income, Number eight; Marital Status, Number nine; and Number eleven, concerning living structure, are standard questions in other studies describing church membership.

The question regarding family composition, Number ten, was thought that it would possibly yield correlatable information regarding church attendance. It is based on sociological studies concerning characteristics of persons based on their position in the family constellation.

Questions twelve through twenty-nine concern relationships with God and about God. The image of God is included and hidden in these questions. Some are asked directly, and some indirectly, to give more accurate results.

The entire questionnaire is designed with the idea of stimulating theological thinking for those not usually inclined to think in this way. It is fairly obvious when the answers among the questions are incongruent, as no effort has been made to hide the repeated themes of the questions through both direct and indirect questions.

The image or images of God are elucidated from the activity of prayer, primarily, since this questionnaire is designed for both churched and unchurched populations. From the results of the Gallup Poll, prayer seemed to be an activity in which both the churched and unchurched will engage if they are spiritually inclined.

However, questions concerning church attendance and the effect of God in one's life are also included. The object of these questions is to shed light on the participant's attitudes concerning the image of God. In order to do this, the questions are so ordered as to draw one into thinking about a relationship with God through prayer or spiritual application of meditation.

Description of populations

There are three major population groups considered in this questionnaire. These are: (1) the churched, who are described as those persons who attend church at least once a month or twelve times a year, and not in connection with a special event, such as a wedding, funeral or holiday. The churched population is limited to members of United Methodist

Churches in southern California. (2) The unchurched population, are described by this study as those persons who attend church less than twelve times per year. Attendance for special occasions is not included in the twelve required services of worship. Some of the unchurched population claimed participation in Eastern religions, but did not participate as much as twelve times per year in worship services. (3) Seminary students attending the School of Theology at Claremont of several denominations of Christian churches are included in the survey. The majority of the students are United Methodist.

All of the participants who took part in the survey were currently residing in southern California, although it was not necessarily the permanent address for the students.

The population questioned included persons of all ages, from teenage to older adults. There is a substantial range for each age group, except for the seminary population, which has a large majority of young adults. The unchurched population consists of fifty-eight participants from three cities in southern California.

The seminary student population from the School of Theology at Claremont totals 111 participants.

The questionnaire was sent to the United Methodist churches in southern California which agreed to participate. Not every United Methodist Church in the area was solicited. However, included in the study are urban, suburban, African-American and European-American United Methodist members.

Please complete the questionnaire as thoroughly as you can. We sincerely appreciate your help.

1. What is your age?

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ 17 or younger | ☐ 30-34 | ☐ 50-59 |
| ☐ 18-23 | ☐ 35-39 | ☐ 60-69 |
| ☐ 24-29 | ☐ 40-49 | ☐ 70-Above (1) |

2. What is your sex?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| ☐ Female | |
| ☐ Male | (2) |

3. How often do you go to church? Approximately:

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| ☐ 40 Sundays or more/year | ☐ Major holidays only | ☐ Never |
| ☐ 25 Sundays/year | ☐ Communion Sundays | |
| ☐ 12 Sundays/year | ☐ Other than Sundays | (3) |

4. What is your occupation? Check more than one if applicable.

- | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Clergy | ☐ High technical | ☐ Unemployed |
| ☐ Professional | ☐ Teacher | ☐ Other _____ |
| ☐ Office-Clerical | ☐ Houseperson | |
| ☐ Blue collar | ☐ Retired | (4) |

5. What is your religious affiliation?

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ United Methodist | ☐ Presbyterian | ☐ Baptist |
| ☐ Lutheran | ☐ Roman Catholic | ☐ Pentecostal |
| ☐ Episcopal | ☐ Congregational | ☐ Other _____ |
| | | ☐ None (5) |

6. What is your race or major ethnic origin?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----|
| ☐ Asian | ☐ Latin American | |
| ☐ European | ☐ Polynesian | |
| ☐ African | ☐ Other _____ | (6) |

7. What is your highest educational level?

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Some high school or less | ☐ College grad (B.S./B.A.) | ☐ Doctorate |
| ☐ High school graduate | ☐ Some graduate school | |
| ☐ Some college | ☐ Master's Degree | (7) |

8. What is your household income?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Less than \$10,000 | ☐ \$30,000 - \$40,000 | ☐ \$76,000 - more |
| ☐ \$10,000 - \$19,000 | ☐ \$40,000 - \$50,000 | |
| ☐ \$20,000 - \$30,000 | ☐ \$60 - \$75,000 | (8) |

9. What is your marital status?

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----|
| ☐ Single | ☐ Widowed | |
| ☐ Married | ☐ Divorced | (9) |

10. What is your current immediate family composition?

- | | | |
|--|---|------|
| ☐ No children | ☐ Only boy/s | |
| ☐ One child | ☐ Only girl/s | |
| ☐ Two or more children | ☐ Live alone | |
| ☐ Children girl/s & boy/s | ☐ Live with spouse | |
| | ☐ Other _____ | (10) |

11. Do you:

- | | | |
|--|---|------|
| ☐ Rent or lease house? | ☐ Own condominium? | |
| ☐ Own house? | ☐ Rent apartment? | |
| ☐ Own mobile home? | ☐ Other _____ | |
| ☐ Rent/lease mobile home? | | (11) |

12. Do you believe there is a God?

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ Sometimes | |
| ☐ No | | (12) |

13. Who first told you about God?

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Mother | ☐ Minister | ☐ Bible | |
| ☐ Father | ☐ Friend | ☐ Book | |
| ☐ Church School | ☐ Radio/TV | ☐ Other _____ | (13) |

14. How often do you pray?

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| ☐ 1-2 times a year | | |
| ☐ 2-8 times a month | | |
| ☐ 2-14 times a week | | |
| ☐ 3-10 or more times daily | | (14) |

15. Where are you when you pray? (You may check more than one if applicable.)

- | | | |
|--|---|------|
| ☐ In private | ☐ Church | |
| ☐ In public | ☐ Home | |
| ☐ Both private and public | ☐ Grace before meals | |
| ☐ Other _____ | | (15) |

16. To whom do you most often address your prayers?

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Jesus | ☐ Christ | |
| ☐ Spirit of God | ☐ A Saint | |
| ☐ Father | ☐ Almighty God | |
| ☐ Creator. | ☐ Other _____ | (16) |

17. Where do you picture God as living? (Check all that are applicable.)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Heaven | ☐ Church | |
| ☐ Nature | ☐ Homes | |
| ☐ People | ☐ Other _____ | (17) |

18. What more accurately fits your idea of God?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Spirit | ☐ Nature | ☐ Other _____ |
| ☐ Mother | ☐ Jesus | |
| ☐ Father | ☐ Christ | (18) |

19. What is your more important or usual image of God?

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Human being
(neither sex) | ☐ Spirit without form | ☐ Other _____ |
| ☐ Nature | ☐ Man | |
| | ☐ Woman | (19) |

20. If you can picture God as a human being, what color is God?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Black | ☐ Oriental | |
| ☐ White | ☐ Other _____ | (20) |

21. Does God seem to you in appearance to be . . .

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Very old | ☐ Youthful | |
| ☐ Middle age | ☐ Other _____ | (21) |

22. Is God really alive and active?

- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Yes | |
| ☐ No | (22) |

23. Does God answer your prayers?

- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Yes | |
| ☐ No | (23) |

24. How often do you talk about God with your friends?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Never | |
| ☐ Frequently | |
| ☐ Occasionally | (24) |

25. How does God most importantly affect your life?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|
| ☐ Comfort | ☐ Very little | |
| ☐ Guide | ☐ Not at all | |
| ☐ Security | ☐ Other _____ | (25) |

26. I participate in church because of . . .

- | | | |
|--|---|------|
| ☐ Fear of God | ☐ Obedience to church | |
| ☐ Love of God | ☐ Obedience to country | |
| ☐ Peer pressure | ☐ Love for parents | |
| ☐ Good for job | ☐ I don't | |
| ☐ Other _____ | | (26) |

27. In your experience of God, which of the following is more important to your communication with God?

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------|
| ☐ The Father | ☐ The Son | |
| ☐ The Spirit | | (27) |

28. In my image of God, God has:

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| ☐ Male characteristics | | |
| ☐ Female characteristics | | |
| ☐ No sex characteristics | | |
| ☐ Both sex characteristics | | (28) |

29. Do you believe that God is . . .

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|------|
| ☐ The Father | ☐ The Father, Spirit, and the | |
| ☐ The Spirit | Son | |
| ☐ The Son | ☐ Other _____ | (29) |

Methods for appraisal

The questionnaire is the research tool, and it was scored using an IBM micro-computer with a DataBase file system for storage and compilation of data. The populations as well as sub-groups of churches and locations of unchurched groups were indicated, so as to locate them for further correlations and information requested by the local churches which were participants. The scores were compared and correlated with the ability of infinite correlation. Means and standard deviations were calculated by a calculator, since the computer did not have this capability. All of the statistical calculations and results are not reported in this paper. The results and conclusions were obtained, in part, by comparison with other surveys and information.

Some questions were eliminated from the discussion in this paper because of mixed and inconclusive answers. They are noted in the section, Statistical Review in Chapter III, below.

Statistical review

The greatest number of respondents of the seminary population were in the 24-29 year age bracket; 40-49 for the unchurched population and 50-59 years for the church population.

The survey participants consisted of 78% female and 22% male for the church population; 75% male and 25% female

for the seminary population; and 89% female and 11% male for the unchurched population.

The majority of the church population indicated that they attended church forty Sundays or more per year. The majority of the seminary students also attended church forty or more times per year. The majority of the unchurched population attended church "Never." If the unchurched participants were of another religion, they must not have attended their worship service for twelve times per year to have been included in the survey.

The occupational question (Number 4) indicated that the church population was almost evenly divided between "Professional" and "Office-Clerical" except for 20% who responded, "Retired." The unchurched population consisted of 63% "Professional," 23% "Unemployed," and 13% "Teacher." There were one percent who marked various other answers.

The church population were all United Methodists church affiliated, while the majority of the unchurched were unaffiliated with any church. The seminary student population contained a majority of United Methodist participants. All of the other possibilities were included except for Roman Catholic, and there were some Unitarians checked for "Other."

Question Number six seemed quite straightforward. However, while the majority of the church population and the seminary student population were European-American, but most of these two populations checked "Other" and explained

that they were "White," Caucasian," or "American." This difference is an unexpected but interesting sociologically especially since the unchurched population had no European-American that checked "Other." Every "European-American" in the unchurched population checked that category. A confusion with the question or choices of answers would be considered except that for this group every one of the participants understood the question and answers. The three populations have comparable education.

The populations of the unchurched, churchd and seminary students each had a majority of college graduate or more on the education question, Number seven. Therefore, the results of this questionnaire presented in this paper may be limited in its representation of the unchurched, since the Gallup Poll indicated a blue-collar worker who is male and with little or no college education as the profile of the most unchurched of that population.

The household income for the majority of the seminary population was "Less than \$10,000." It was "\$30,000 - \$40,000" for the churchd and "\$20,000-\$30,000" for the unchurched population.

The majority of the seminary population were married, as were the churchd population. The majority of unchurched participants were unmarried.

The responses to question Number ten, "Family Composition," were so mixed that no significant differences were discernable.

As expected from other studies, the majority of the church population owned their own homes, while the majority of the seminary population did not own their own home, but rented apartments. The slight majority of unchurched population owned their own homes, while 46% rent or lease apartments or houses, and two percent owned their own condominiums.

The following questions concern religion rather than defining the population.

The majority of each group almost unanimously responded that they believed that there is a God.

The response to question Number fourteen, "How often do you pray?" was not defined as to population grouping.

The responses to Number fifteen indicated that the great majority of participants do, indeed, pray. Church population pray at "Home," in both private and public, while the unchurched pray in private places. Many of both groups indicated that they pray frequently in "Other" places. Answers were individual, but many private places were named. The seminary population checked all of the possible places to pray that were indicated, and many places were added to these through the use of the "Other" possibility. The "Other" answer for the seminarians was in every case a private place, as it was also with the other populations.

The majority of church population address their prayers to either "Almighty God" or "Father." The majority of the seminary population reported that they address their

prayers to "Spirit fo God," but this was a slight majority with "Other" as the second most checked response. The written answer varied so much as to make it impossible to give common answer. The most frequent reponse for the unchurched population and the majority was "Spirit of God."

The answers to question Number seventeen, "Where do you picture God as living?" were so varied that interpretation by population is not significant statistically, perhaps because the question allowed the respondent to check all responses that are applicable. It can be noted, however, that the seminary population wrote notes on this question as they did frequently throughout the questionnaire.

From this point on in the questionnaire, the respondents answered more of the questions by writing notes, sometimes in conjunction with a checked answer, and sometimes without marking an answer at all. Perhaps this is because Question Number seventeen indicated that one might check as many answer possibilities as were applicable. In addition many of the remaining questions have "Other" as a possible answer. This may have given the impression that writing on all of the questions was all that was needed instead of choosing an option that was given.

Many of the respondents remarked, at this point, that they noted their inconsistency with their answers. This was particularly true of the churchd population. The seminary population, at this point, just began to write longer and

longer notes.

The majority of responses to the question, "What more accurately fits your idea of God?" was "Spirit" for the unchurched and churchd populations, while the seminary population's answers were mixed.

The most usual image of God for the churchd participant was "Man." For both the unchurched population and the seminary population the most usual image of God was either "Human being" (neither sex) or "Spirit without form."

Virtually all of the European-Americans picture God as "White," with the churchd population having a larger majority than the seminary population checking this category. The unchurched population indicated that they do not see God as having color, or something to this effect, in a very large majority.

Question Number twenty-one, "Does God seem to you in appearance to be...." "Very old," "Middle age," "Youthful," or "Other" as choices, was answered by the churchd population as either "Very old" or "Middle age." The middle aged group indicated that God is "Middle age." The younger groups of churchd population chose "Very old."

The seminary population had mixed responses as to age, and the unchurched most frequently checked, "Middle age."

There was no distinct answer to Question Number twenty-two, "Is God really alive and active?" There were, however, many notes that indicated a frustration with this

question in all of the populations.

Even though almost every participant in every population responded that they pray, a minority of each group responded that God answers their prayers.

To the question, "How often do you talk about God with your friends?" the churchd and unchurchd marked "Occasionally" with the churchd population having a higher majority than the unchurchd for this category. The seminary population were virtually evenly distributed between the answers, "Never" and "Occasionally."

To Question Number twenty-five, the churchd population answered that God most importantly affects their lives as a "Comfort," "Guide" or "Security." The unchurchd population responded, "Very little" to this question, and the seminary population checked the answer, "Other," and wrote small essays in the margins.

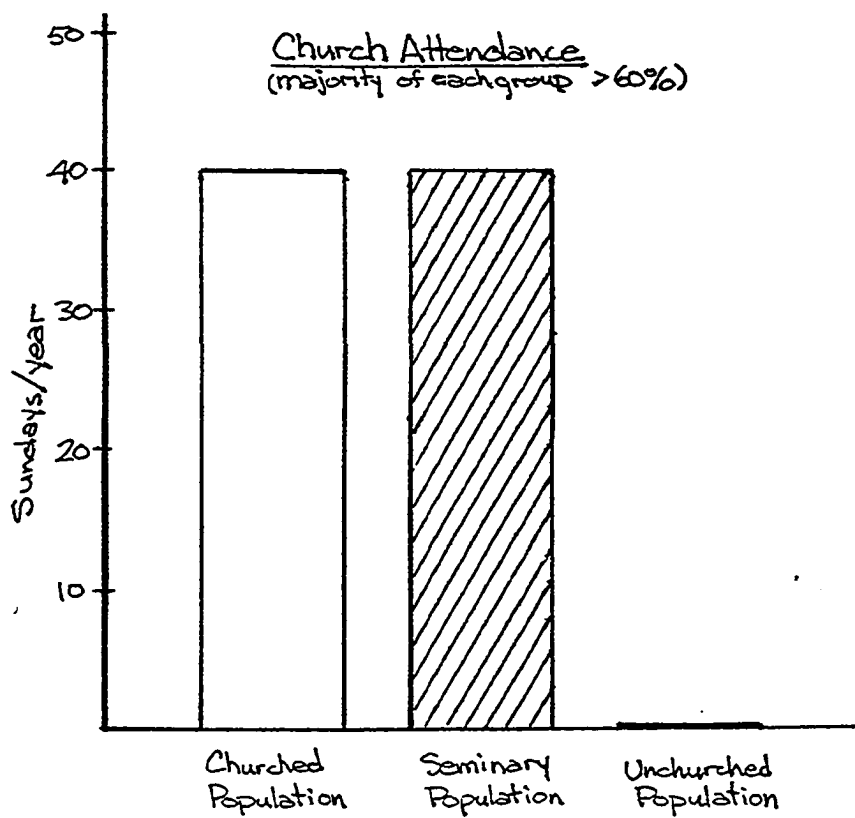
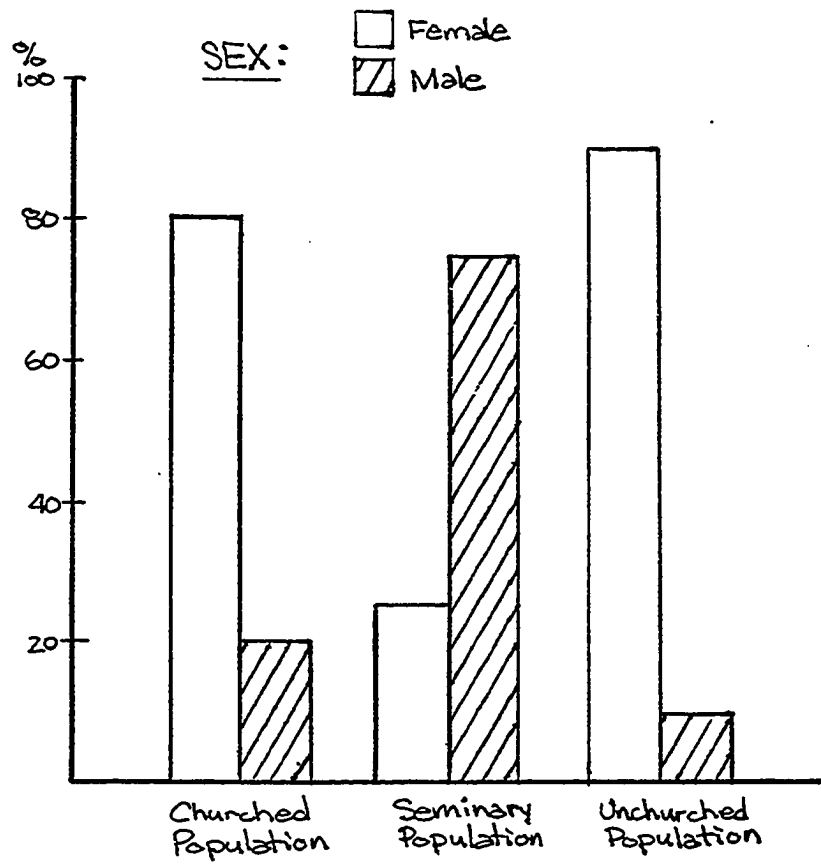
Responses to Question Number twenty-six, "I participate in church because of ..." were very mixed. For the churchd population, it was divided among the answers, "Fear of God," "Love of God," and "Love for parents." The unchurchd population obviously marked, "I don't." The seminary population answers to this question were mixed, possibly because they checked so many, even though this possibility was not marked on the questionnaire. They were to make only one choice for this question. Also, many of the seminary population marked "Other" and wrote another choice or idea.

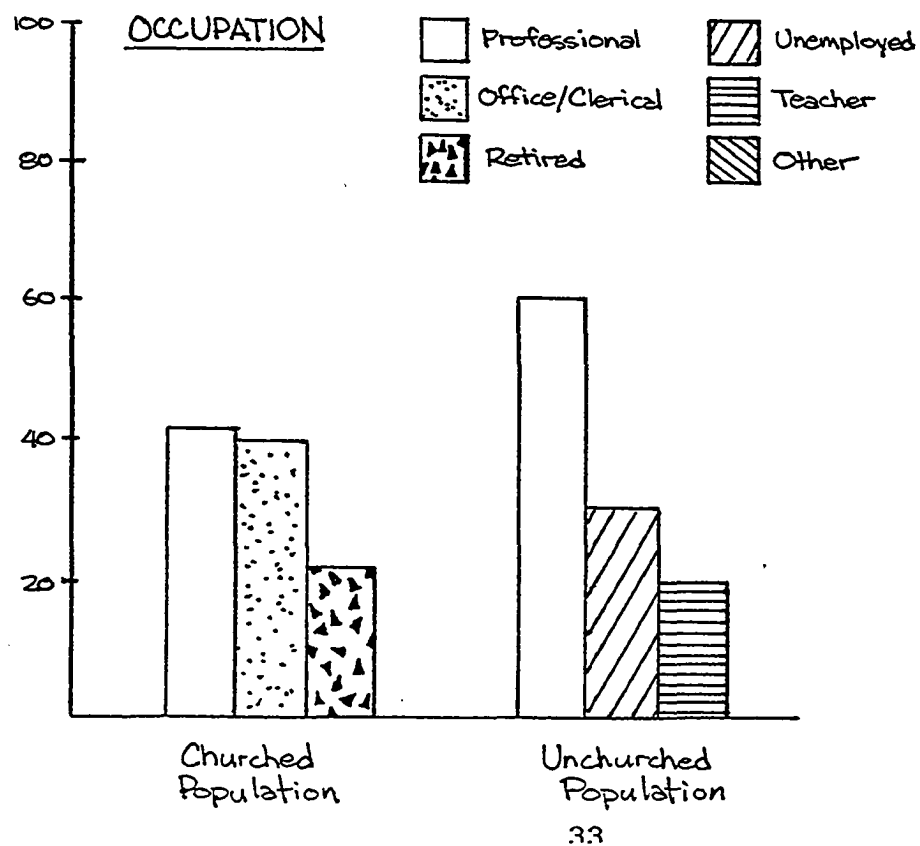
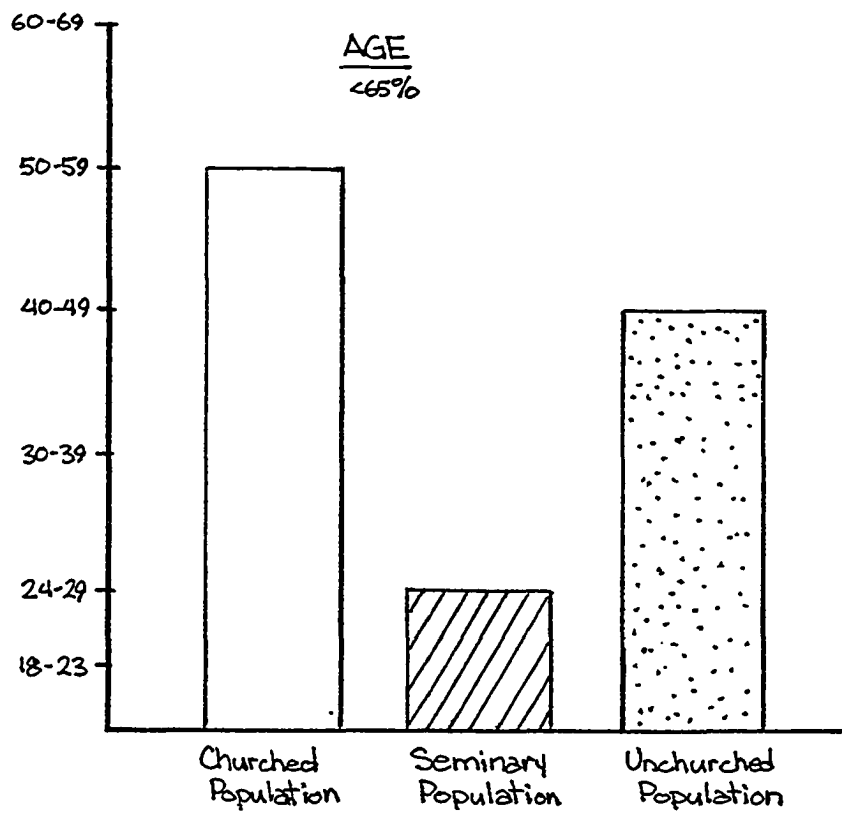
The majority of church participants chose, "The Father," as their response to Question Number twenty-seven, "In your experience of God, which of the following is more important to your communication with God?" while the unchurched population chose the answer, "The Spirit." The majority of the seminary population marked all three, even though they were instructed to mark only one choice.

To Question Number twenty-eight, the church sample responded that God has "Male characteristics." The unchurched group responded, "No sex characteristics," and the seminary population answered, "Both characteristics."

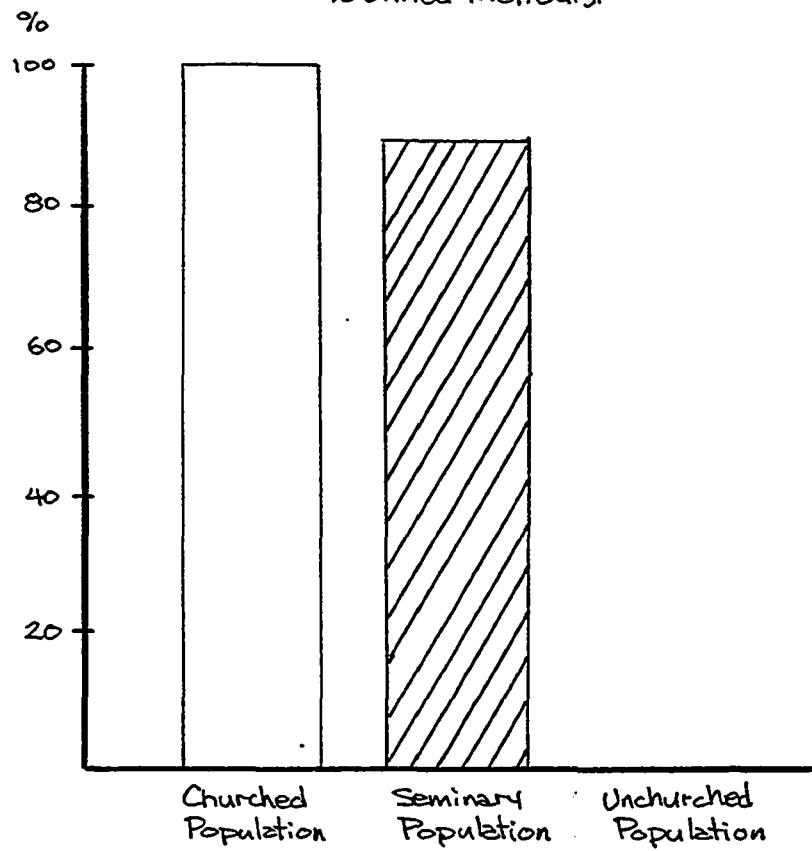
To the last question, the majority of each population responded that God is, "Father, Spirit, and the Son."

It is to be noted that many of these responses, both individually and collectively within populations, reveal some inconsistencies.

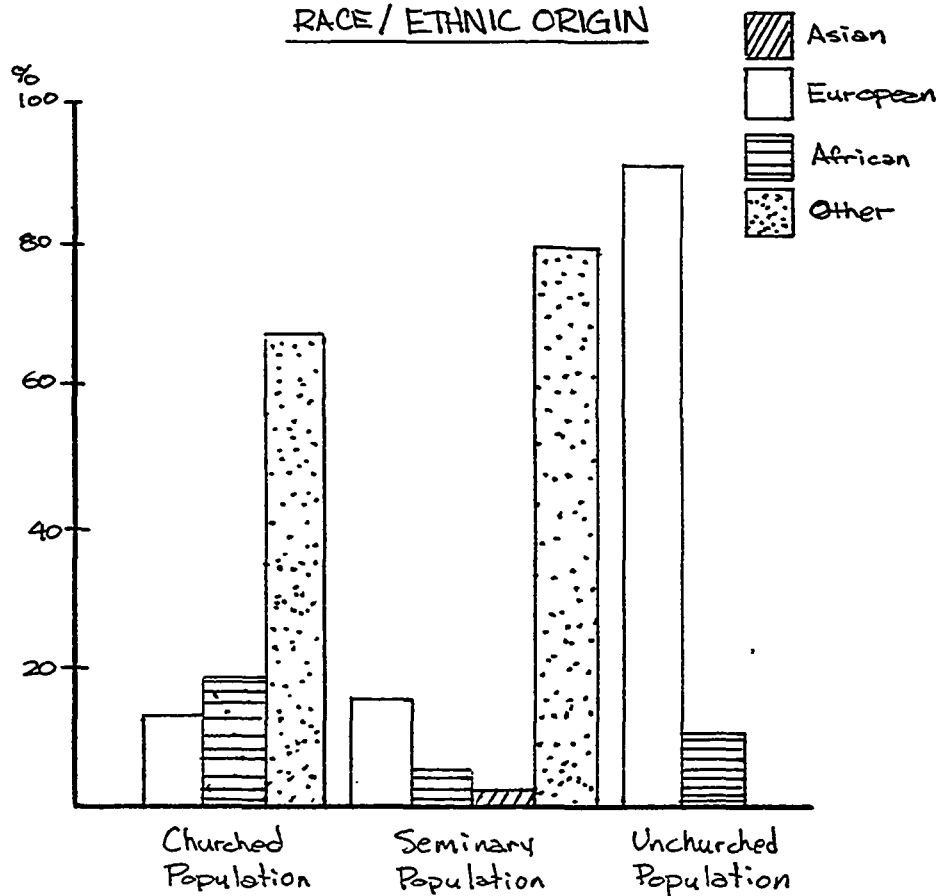


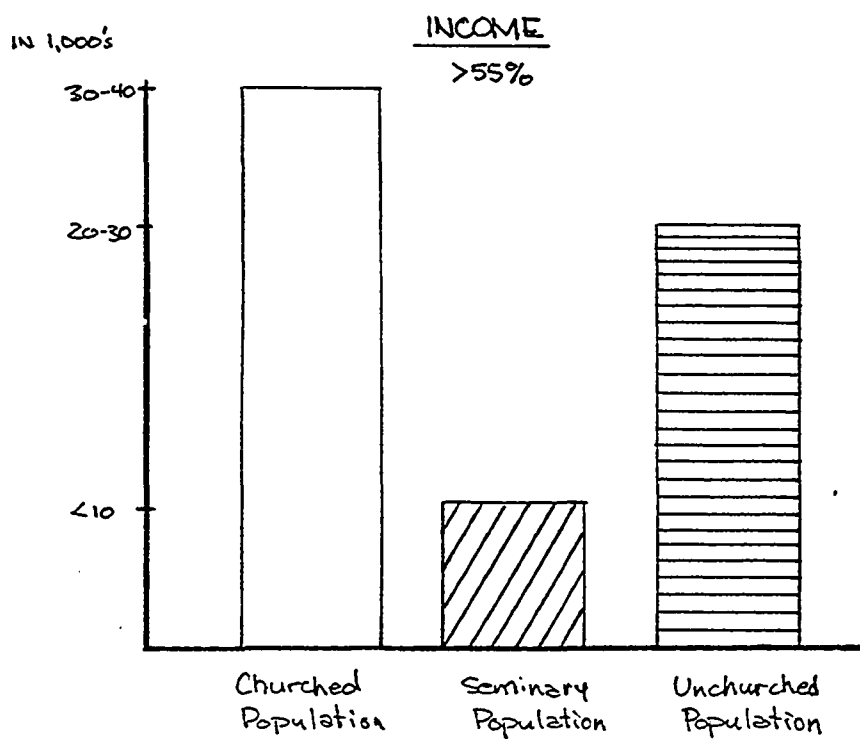
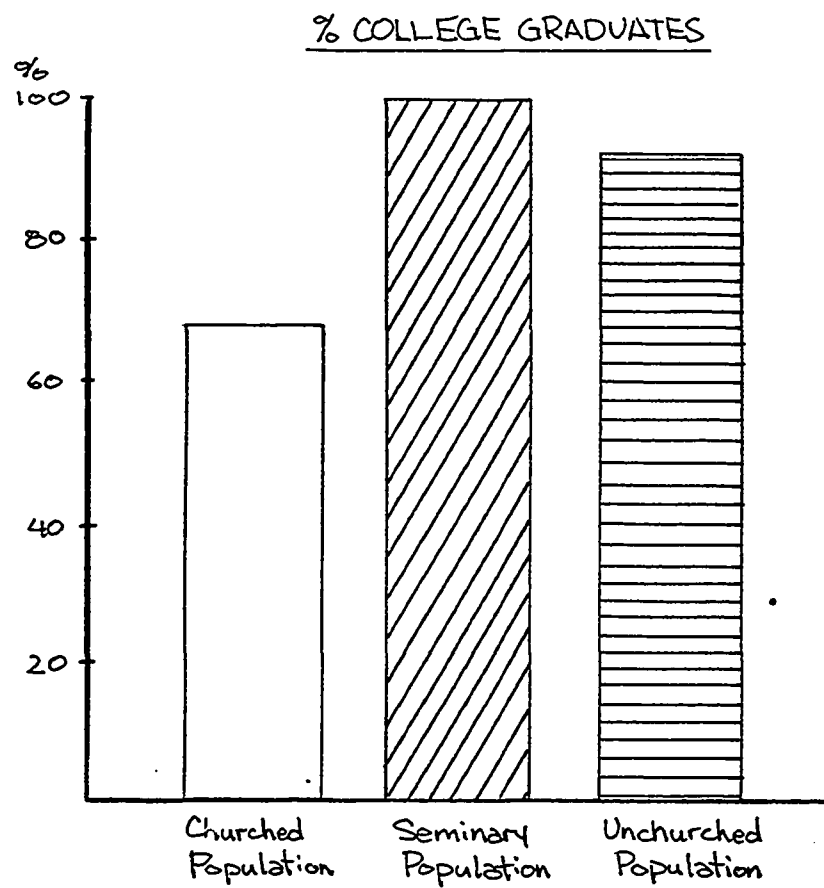


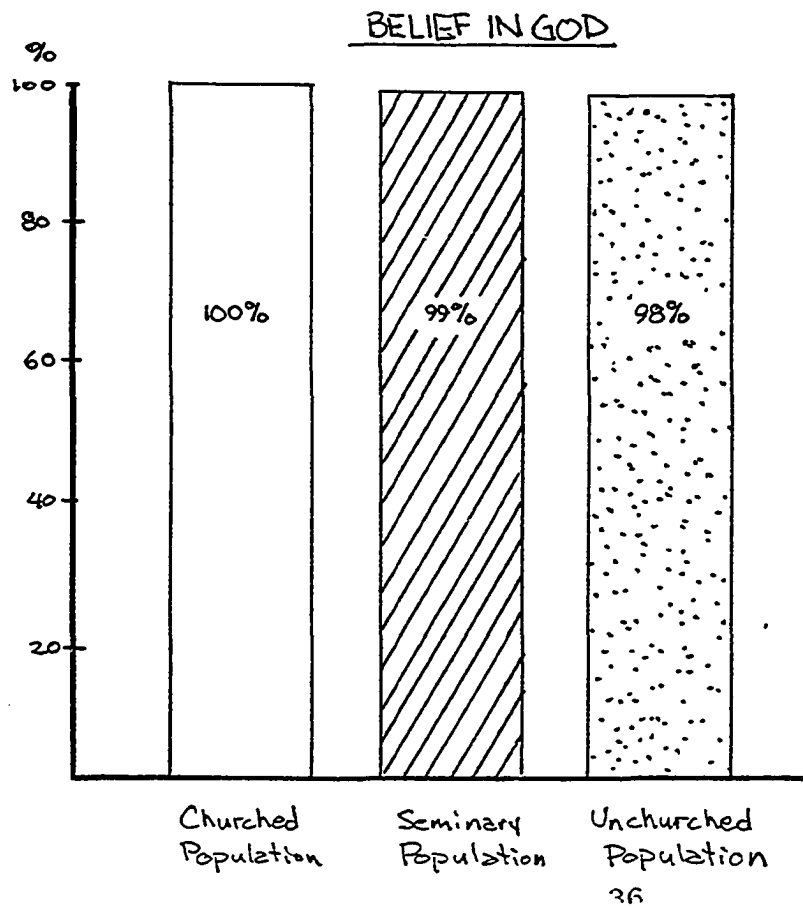
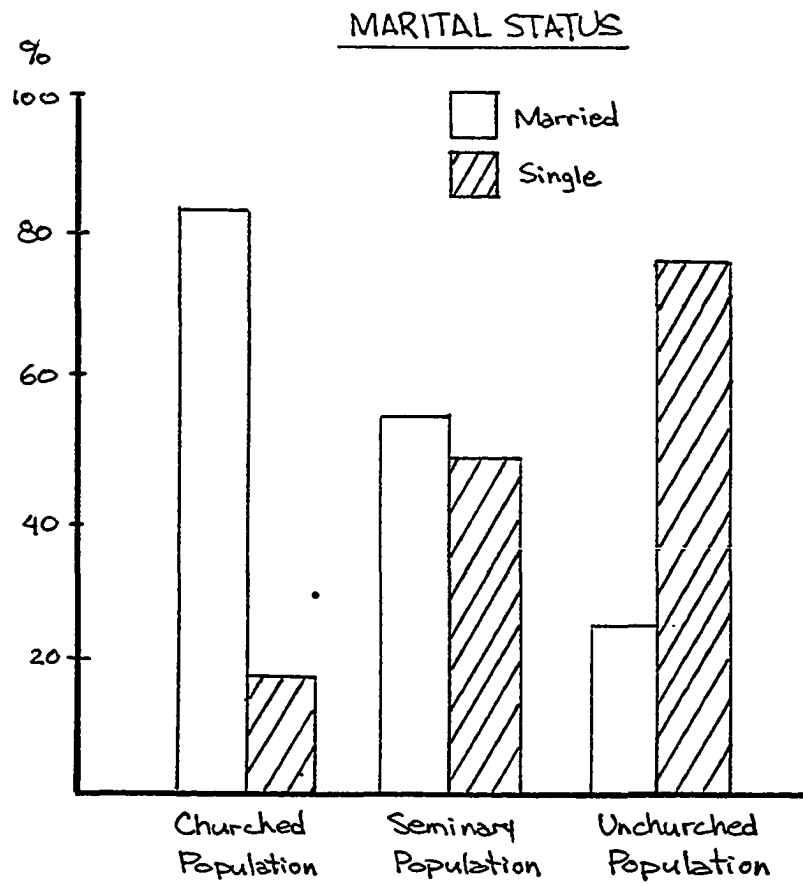
CHURCH AFFILIATION % United Methodist

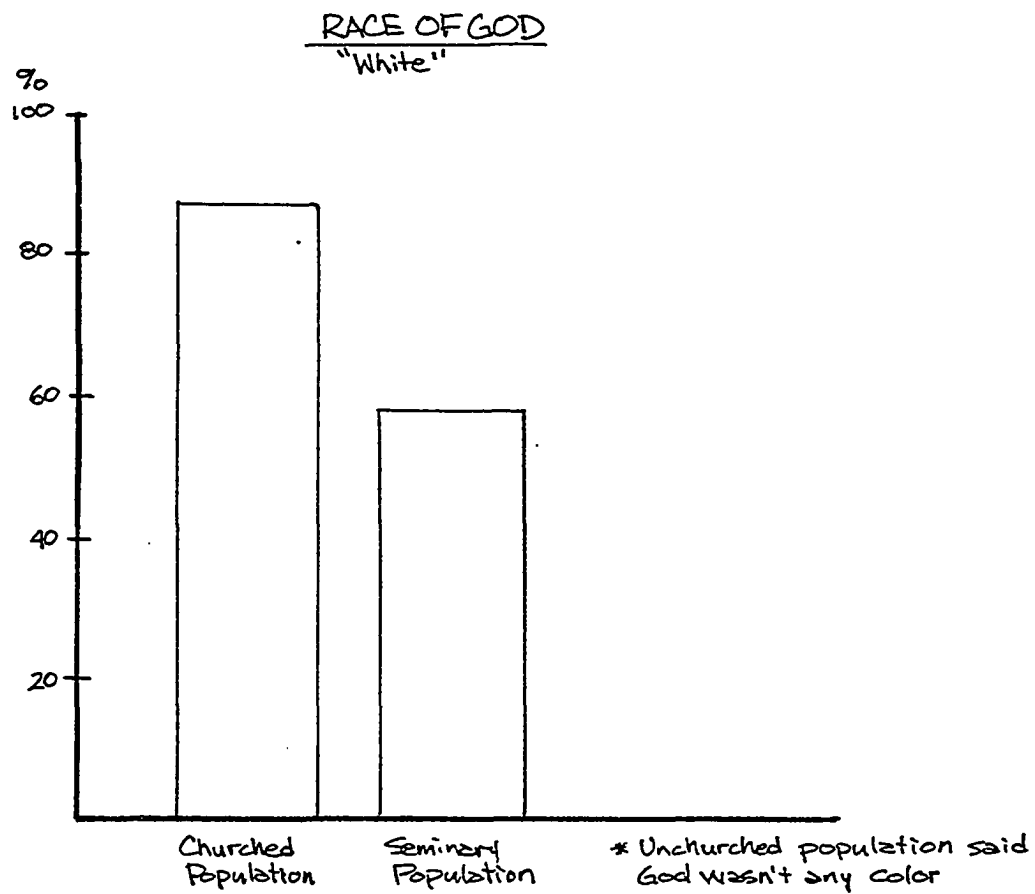


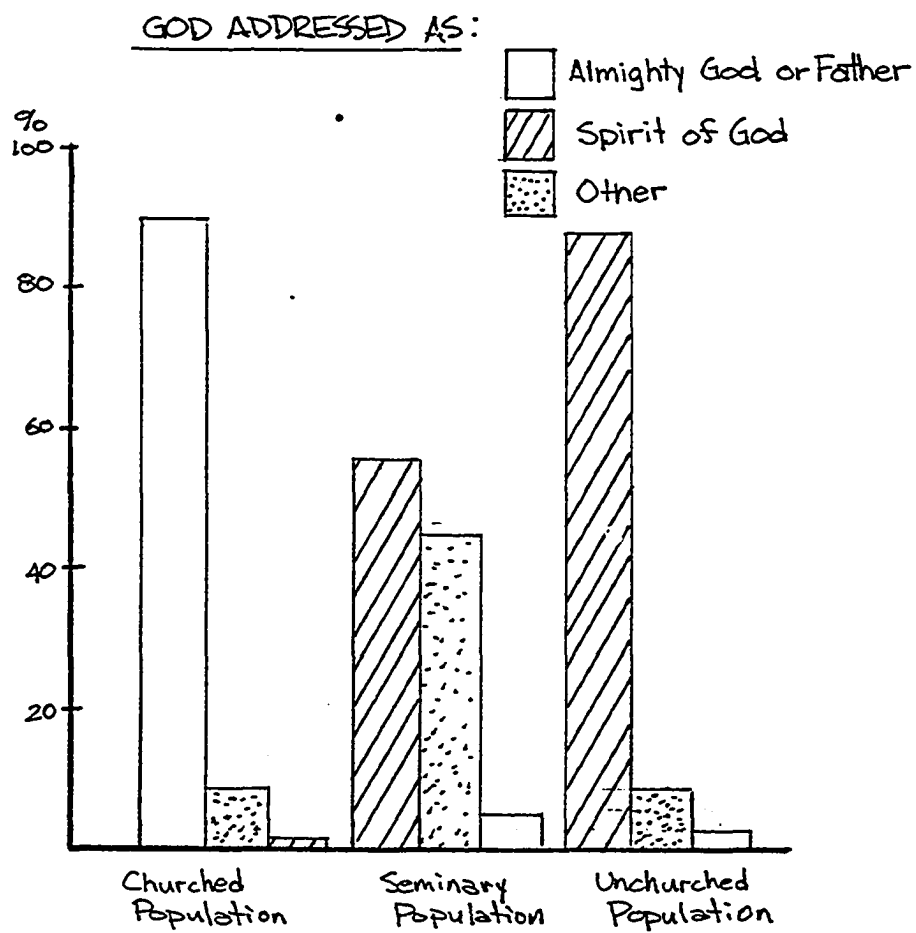
RACE / ETHNIC ORIGIN











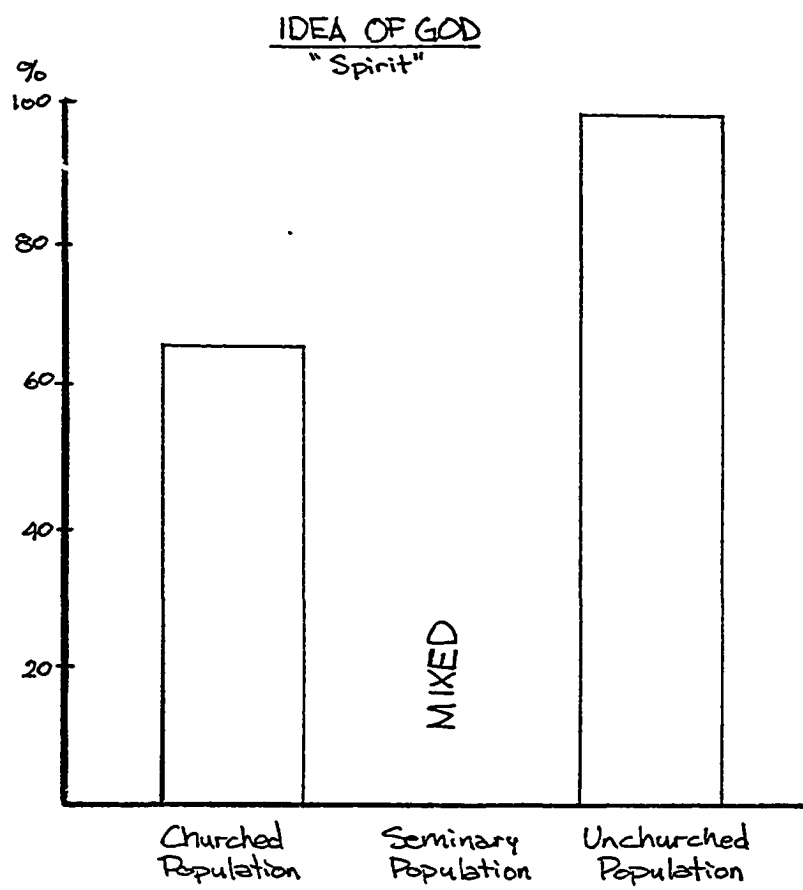
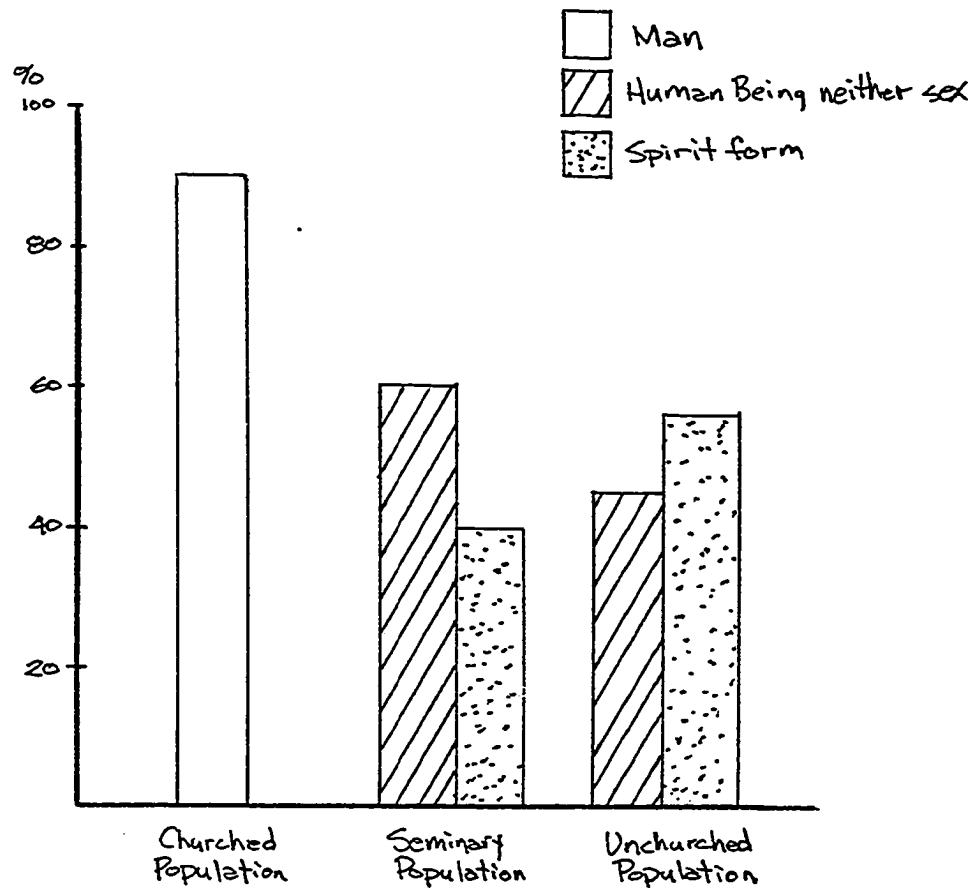


IMAGE OF GOD



CHAPTER IV

GOD AS SPIRIT AS DESCRIBED BY THREE THEOLOGIANs

The results of the questionnaire led this writer to the conclusion that the participants in the study preferred God as Spirit over other images that were presented in this questionnaire.

Because of this, a history of the development of the image of Spirit as well as an analysis of it by Lampe is included in this chapter. A comparative view of the Holy Spirit in the writings of Pittenger, a process theologian and Moltmann, a German systematic theologian is also included.

All three theologians have written books on the subject of the Holy Spirit, or as Lampe writes, God as Spirit. It may provide insight into the preference for personal regard of God as Spirit.

Christianity has had enormous difficulty with the concepts of God that it developed and then ever since has been trying to explain. Primarily, the controversies have to do with the idea of monotheism, which Christians were not willing to give up, and so the idea of the trinity was established to fulfill Greek ideas of God as well as retaining the basic monotheism of Judaism. ¹

The problem with the idea of Spirit and how to categorize and classify it began only after a Christology of

¹
G.W.H. Lampe, God as Spirit (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 138.

Spirit then was more or less developed in order to bridge the Jesus fully hypostasized him as God the Son. 1 The Holy Spirit then was more or less developed in order to bridge the gap between the Creator, God the Father and God the Son, who was Jesus Christ. 2

The image of God, which was so clear to the Jew as one, inseparable God now had become unclear for the Christian. The Christian has not one image with which to come to an understanding, but now there are three separate identities and a composite to comprehend. 3

While the lay person repeats the creeds of the Church and from these and from hymns, as well as from the scripture of the New Testament, learns the concept of the trinity, still seeks communion with God. Therefore, each one must pick an image of God with whom to strike up a relationship through prayer. Prayer or meditation is the means by which Christians "talk" with God. 4 It is my observation that this person of the trinity, with whom most participants in the questionnaire described in this paper communicate, is the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God immanent, and so, in seeking communion with God, people naturally seek God-with-us. 5

1
Lampe, pp.22-24.

2
Lampe, pp.35,36.

3
Lampe, pp.137,138.

4
Lampe, pp. 87-90,93, 94.

5
Lampe, p. 206.

It is for this reason that I have chosen to concentrate this theological discussion of the Holy Spirit and its action and direction, which is part of its description.

The early Christian writers thought it was necessary to ascribe to Jesus a scriptural Messianism. 1 Just how the Holy Spirit was to bridge the gap between God the Father/Creator and God the Son/Jesus Christ and to find a scriptural basis for the idea was difficult, and with it began many controversies which have not yet been settled in Christian thought.

In Hebrew, Spirit is a bridge word indicating God's outreach toward humans. 2 Other bridge words in Hebrew and early Christian thought are "Word" and "Wisdom." These words were necessary to describe for humans their union, communion or encounter with God. In their original usage the words were not metaphysical terms describing a hypostasized Person; rather they were words used to express an inner feeling of a connection with "other." 3

In the book of Wisdom, the terms God's Wisdom, God's Word and God's Spirit are interchangeable terms 4 and later, in Greek thought, "Logos" became identified with the mind of God, which would also be interchangeable with the words, Wisdom, Word and Spirit. 5

¹
Lampe, p. 24.

²
Lampe, p. 35.

³
Lampe, pp.36,37.

⁴
Lampe, p.132.

⁵
Lampe, pp. 220-224, 116.

It was, however, probably Paul who first identified the idea of "Logos" with Jesus. 1 Both of the ideas of the Sonship of Jesus and the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit became an intermediary instead of God actually being experienced. 2

If Spirit is used as the supernatural activity of God or estactic possession or impersonal force, then Spirit really becomes a dynamic force rather than God being involved in a personal way in human lives. 3

Jesus can be described as the Christ in the sense that he was one in whom God had continued immanence and had the ultimate perfect faith, but his description cannot be his alone if this is the only description given to the Christ. 4 It is significant that around him grew a community of people who because of their experience with him or of stories they had heard about him were able to reinterpret the scriptures in a way that gave new meaning and perspective to their entire existence. (The Christ may, however, be found in others, because the historical Jesus has difficulty in bearing all the weight, theologically, as the one Christ if only his life and death as we have them in the scriptures are taken into account.) 5

The very idea of assigning Jesus as God's Son implies

¹
Lampe, p. 123.

²
Lampe, p. 211, 217.

³
Lampe, pp. 50-51.

⁴
Lampe, pp. 52,53.

⁵
Lampe, pp. 111-113.

that he was other than God. Using the term, "begotten of God," does not completely erase that implication. We may legitimately use Jesus as a reference point for a new beginning for those who understand his relationship with an immanent God. 1

But the problem in the history of the trinity remains if Jesus is assigned the role of the one and only and perfect embodiment of Christ and give him the station of one Person of a Trinity of God. This leaves humanity with a gap between it and history and between God and humanity. 2

The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, pneuma, "the wind that blows where it wills," and the Church have all been stuffed into those gaps in innumerable ways. In God's personal reach toward humans and the subsequent disclosure in persons who reach towards God a communion of mind and will is born in which divine activity of Love can occur without diminishing humanity. But when the second coming of Christ became important, then the Spirit became the sign that pointed to the eschatological hope of salvation. God became more real as outside of history, in the eschaton. 3

Lampe concludes, "...the Trinitarian model is in the end less satisfactory for the articulation of our basic Christian experience than the unifying concept of God as Spirit." 4

¹
Lampe, p. 220, 221

³
Lampe, pp. 169-172

²
Lampe, pp. 116-118.

⁴
Lampe, p. 228.

The image of God has become tied up in theological arguments in which the laity and unchurched have no part. This creates theological discussions within the structure of the theological schools and institutional church while a separate discussion occurs among the unchurched as we can see reflected in songs, both in the church and outside of the church. The groups are not necessarily discussing the same subject since theologians have different needs than laity who this writer believes are interested in finding meaning in life and communion with God.

Lampe ends his book, God as Spirit, with this description of God in the form of a creed.

I believe in the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the sense that the one God, the Creator and Saviour Spirit, revealed himself and acted decisively for us in Jesus. I believe in the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, in the sense that the same one God, the Creator and Saviour Spirit, is here and now not far from every one of us; for in him we live and move, in him we have our being, in us, if we consent to know and trust him, he will create the Christlike harvest: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control. 1

Lampe certainly does not articulate the type of subordination of the Spirit that we encounter in other theologians or in the traditional creeds, hymnody and liturgy of the Church. He does, however, assign a masculine gender to the Spirit and to all aspects of God. Lampe's theology of God as Spirit could possibly be acceptable in a general way

¹
Lampe, p. 228.

by many persons now disturbed by a confusion of the trinity and their preference for Spirit as a personal image of God.

Moltmann has a very Christologically centered theology. He received much criticism for his lack of attention to the Holy Spirit and so to broaden that concept he wrote the book, The Church in the Power of the Spirit. Moltmann recognizes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God in Christ and so views this Spirit as originating at the time of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. He rarely refers to the Holy Spirit except in the context of the church as the title of his book suggests.

"The church is present wherever the manifestation of the Spirit takes place." ¹ Moltmann does, however, have a broad concept of the definition of the Church. He believes that wherever the Spirit is working, there the true Church exists even in the most unchurched believers in our society.

Pittenger is another theologian who is a process theologian and quite different in his approach to the Holy Spirit from Moltmann. Unlike Moltmann, Pittenger views the Holy Spirit as existing from the beginning of time. ² The Holy Spirit was not only the one who "listed as it willed," but was also to the early Hebrews, the Spirit that filled the chosen to be their heroes. This was also to be included as

¹
Juergen Moltmann, The Church in the Power of the Spirit (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 40.

²
Norman Pittenger, The Holy Spirit (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), p. 40.

the One that resided in nature filling the earth. 1 (This fits into Process Theology well.) Pittenger says, "It is a denial of Christian faith if we think to remove God the Holy Spirit from his world, and we sin in our thinking if we seek to confine the Holy Spirit to the specifically (narrowly) religious aspects of human life." 2

Pittenger defines the Church as the "body of Christ," a Pauline concept, and notes that most Catholic thinking, until recently, was of the organizational view of the Church, despite obvious biblical contradiction. Pittenger does not, himself, seem to be able to release his own thoughts from the consideration of the Church as an organizational structure. "The church," he says, "looks more like a machine than a body." 3 Pittenger also has many references that sound like Anglican liturgy, and he mixes these freely with process theology which seem to be contradictory.

Pittenger insists that the Holy Spirit is not confined to the Christian Church but "blows where it lists." He warns us to be distrustful of those who would try to judge what is a true Church or member thereof and who is not. "That is for God to decide," he says. 4

Moltmann seems to concede his point concerning the Holy Spirit being present only in the Church when he writes,

¹
Pittenger, p. 39.

²
Pittenger, p. 16.

²
Pittenger, p. 116

⁴
Pittenger, p. 83.

"It would clearly be better to recognize the workings of the Spirit in growing unofficial ecumenism than to ban it altogether and thus rellegate it to a no-man's land between the denominations and outside the official church." 1

Who is the Holy Spirit in the theologies of Moltmann and Pittenger?

Pittenger quotes the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed's answer to the question of who the Holy Spirit is. It says that the Holy Spirit is called "the Lord, the Giver of Life." 2 He agrees with an old teacher of his that the Holy Spirit is the most modest 'person' of the Godhead. 3 It is, you might also say, the forgotten person in Christian thought. "And you could almost say that after the question of the Holy Spirit was raised through the appearance of such heresies as Macedonianism the Holy Spirit said to theologians, 'What about me?'" Not much was done, however, but as Pittenger observes, "maybe it is better not to have a cult of the Holy Spirit; maybe it is better to remember that we don't so much pray to the Holy Spirit as pray in him." 4

Moltmann and Pittenger would agree that the Holy Spirit, among other things, is the love that binds the Father

¹
Hans Kueng and Juergen Moltmann, "Editorial: Towards an Ecumenical Confession of Faith," in their An Ecumenical Confession of Faith (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), p. xi.

²
Pittenger, p. 36.

³
Pittenger, p. 66.

⁴
Pittenger, p. 11.

and the Son.

Moltmann answers the question, Who is the Holy Spirit? in indirect ways always writing of the workings, the action of the Holy Spirit, which to him are synonymous with the Church.

Only in reference to the trinity does he actually refer to the Holy Spirit as an entity of itself. A trinitarian, Moltmann writes of the Holy Spirit as the one who is sent both by the Father and the Son, while the Son is sent only by the Father and the Father is sent by no one. ¹

Although he believes that God in its fullness (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) were present together even before creation began, the Son was not sent until Jesus' birth and the Holy Spirit was then sent at the Son's baptism. Then after the time of the resurrection the Spirit was poured out on its Church. While Moltmann indicates that God in its fullness was present before creation, the Son and the Holy Spirit had no action in the world until they were sent. First the Son was sent, then the Holy Spirit was sent - each by the Father. The Holy Spirit remained as a force of action in the Church to guide history towards the eschaton. Thus, a successive view of the trinity is presented by Moltmann.

Pittenger is also a trinitarian, preferring the term triunitarian, but he does not agree with Moltmann concerning

¹ Juergen Moltmann, "The Triunitarian History of God," Theology 78 (December 1975) 635.

the concept of successive view of the trinity in history. The Spirit, to Pittenger, allows us to know God in three ways, through the Father, through the Son (whom the Father sent), and through fellowship with each other, which is present because of the sending of the Son by the Father.

The two theologians differ, also, on the concept of whether Christianity is monotheistic or tritheistic. Moltmann is unusually clear on this point. He writes, "If Christian theology were to become monotheistic, then it would become unchristian. If it were to become humanistic, then it would become atheistic. The doctrine of the trinity authenticates Christian thought and life in the concrete community of Christ." ¹

How can the Holy Spirit be recognized according to these two theologians?

Pittenger answers that it is not so important to recognize the Holy Spirit as it is to serve it in order to reach the goals that the Holy Spirit itself sets. These goals are usually defined in social terms such as "social and economic justice." ² The Holy Spirit works incognito, according to Pittenger, but to discover how God works in creation is not to say that the Holy Spirit does not work there. ³

¹

Moltmann, "The Trinitarian," p. 633.

²

Pittenger, p. 106.

³

Pittenger, p. 67.

The workings of the Holy Spirit may be seen in world history, according to Moltmann, but not in a series of advancements of civilization, but rather in a series of warnings of danger and of crises. The origin of all these crises is the person and history of Jesus Christ, who brought about that first victory over death and experiences of the liberation of the Spirit to the world. This did not result in peace in the world, but rather the opposite. Jesus Christ was not manipulated by history, but his life and death and resurrection bring about crises that will lead to the end.

"History," writes Moltmann, "is just a softer word for revolution." ¹ All of the crises with which persons are faced constantly, according to Moltmann, cause a powerlessness in the individual if s/he is not aware of the continuity that the Holy Spirit gives throughout history. ²

Both Moltmann and Pittenger agree that God is changable throughout history, but Pittenger maintains that what worked for a person 1500 years ago just might not work today, and so to seek solutions and possibilities from the past might be invalid for today's world with all of its crises. He goes even further to say that the Holy Sprit is

¹
Moltmann, The Church, p. 38.

²
Juergen Moltmann, Hope and Planning (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 12 and 122.

giving another word for us today. 1 He does not, however, tell us just what that new word is, but he does indicate that it will come to us through the Church, and, presumably, we will recognize it when the time is "right."

Pittenger views the Holy Spirit at work in the historical past. He indicates that the Holy Spirit may be found in the Middle Ages in Francis of Assisi and in the Reformation which revitalized the community and more recently, in the Wesleyan movement. "in our own time, ecumenical interest, liturgical awakening, astounding concern shown for social problems, racial integration, and the like, may be taken as still another illustration of this process by which the Spirit reanimates what seems to be a nearly dead body." 2 Even the Pentecostal movement may be a sign of the Holy Spirit revitalizing the Church.

Moltmann summarizes the action of the Holy Spirit in times past by writing, "God experiences history in order to gather things to himself." 3

Pittenger describes clearly who the Holy Spirit is for him and how the Holy Spirit works and where the Holy Spirit resides, while Moltmann scarcely gives the Holy Spirit historical existence, through action, until after the sending

¹
Norman Pittenger, Christ in the Haunted Wood (Greenwich, CT: Seabury Press, 1953), p. 126.

²
Pittenger, Holy Spirit, pp. 83-84.

³
Moltmann, "The Triunitarian History," p. 645.

of the Holy Spirit, along with Jesus, by the Father.

Pittenger only speaks vaguely of pressing social needs in the world, while Moltmann really only begins his discussions of the Holy Spirit at this point. Revolution is not mentioned in any of the writings of Pittenger in the bibliography of this paper, while Moltmann is very concerned with the effects of revolution and emphasizes the greater importance of change in the world through some other means. That means is the action of the Spirit of Christ through the Church.

Moltmann views Christians as "joyous revolutionaries, never obsessed with a program of ideology, and ready to laugh about it all in light of the greater, eschatological revolution still to come." ¹ Moltmann later rejects revolution as a way to change political structures and the hope of better conditions here on earth because of the nature of power of revolutionaries and the vicious cycles of the crises of today. Revolutionaries tend to become power hungry, as the previous persons who were in power, and so the oppression continues. He gives as an alternative, action of the Holy Spirit through the Church. He is, however, not specific on just how the Holy Spirit works through persons to come to this end. The end, the final revolution, is the

¹
G. Clarke Chapman, Jr., "Black Theology and Theology of Hope: What Have They to Say to Each Other?" Union Seminary Quarterly Review 29, (Winter 1974) 111.

²
Juergen Moltmann, The Experiment Hope (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 176.

eschaton towards which all history is moving. God will find a way to bring this about and will use Christ's Church to do so.

Pittenger and Moltmann both would probably agree that recent triumphs for minorities in the United States and other parts of the world are the workings of the Holy Spirit. They would also probably agree that any betterment of human condition is the work of the Holy Spirit, and so that is where the Church is also. The problems of nuclear power, mass hunger in the world, depletion of the earth's resources, overpopulation and other modern day crises will be solved by the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Moltmann says of the Holy Spirit:

One cannot 'make' the Christian lifestyle. This style is created by the Spirit. When we personally and in community bind our life with the life of Christ and understand our life history as a small part of God's great history of liberation with the world the rebirth in Spirit renders our life a fragment of the coming rebirth of the world. Our life then begins to shine, because on it the dawn of the coming day of salvation is already reflected. It is alone important that our life, our life experiences and their expression in speaking and remaining silent, in doing and suffering become a messianic sign to others! That is the word of God's Spirit. 1

Pittenger sums up his thoughts of the Holy Spirit by writing, "...it is all a matter of Love at work in the world." 2

¹
Juergen Moltmann, "Messianic Lifestyle," Moravian Theological Studies Bulletin 83 (1972) 234.

²
Pittenger, The Holy Spirit, p. 69.

These are discussions of three views concerning the image of God as Spirit that have been presented. Lampe explains how we are now in theological thought through a discussion of history and heading in the direction of conceptualizing God as all Spirit.

In Moltmann's theology, the Spirit is both subordinated and containerized. The Spirit is subordinated by his Christological thinking and containerized by his perception of the Church as Spirit and Spirit as the Church.

The Spirit to Pittenger has a greater range than that of Moltmann's concept of Spirit, but it appears subordinated to earth's time and experience.

Even if churches are successful in teaching the theology of the Spirit, there appears to be quite a range of images within the image of God as Spirit with only three theologians studied.

CHAPTER V

POPULAR EXPRESSIONS OF GOD

Church-goers are involved in many of the same activities as nonchurch-goers in this country, and it is not the intent of this project to try to distinguish between the two. However, one place the unchurched as well as church people may receive ideas for spiritual growth is through music.

According to the Gallup poll, "One of the reasons the Christian church will increase its strength and influence in the days and years ahead is the power of its music." ¹ Gallup and Poling note that all of the "celebrations of life worth honoring are circled by song and punctuated by music." ² The Songs of Praise in the Old Testament articulate clear images of God. (Ps. 90:1-2)

Charles Wesley used songs to fuel the evangelical movement of his brother, John, as well as to articulate ideas and images concerning God. Even though Charles Wesley subordinated the Spirit in favor of Christology, his hymns were instrumental in providing a valid theology for a people

¹ George Gallup, Jr. and David Poling, The Search for America's Faith (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), p. 127-128.

² Gallup and P., p. 128.

without one. 1

As public schools drop their music programs to save money, the church is becoming the only place that remains for individual participation in singing, if one is not a professional musician. At a concert, we listen; we listen to the radio and to the TV. In many ways we participate less and less in society. We have become almost a society of onlookers.

Church is a place to participate, and congregations still sing together in worship, although the choir has become more the "entertainment." Nevertheless, participation in music by the congregation remains as an integral part of worship in almost every church.

Music to which people can relate, is characteristic of successful religions. It is said that the Hindus in India sang Buddhism out of the country. Because of the interest of the Hindus in music and the involvement of the people in music, Hinduism became a more popular religion than Buddhism. 2

There is a body of unchurched people who are not unreligious people, and they use the oral tradition in song

¹
An example is: Charles Wesley, "O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing," Carlton Young, ed., The Book of Hymns (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1966), Number 1.

²
John A. Hutchison, Unpublished Remarks in the School of Theology at Claremont, World Religions Lecture, Summer, 1983.

to communicate with each other to a great extent. According to Gallup and Poling:

Music is the spirit's universal language; it is the vocabulary of the soul, it becomes the chainlink between people when everything else has failed. It is a divine sign that the church has a large future. ¹

The church as an institution may not be using this aspect of spreading the Word as much as the religious unchurched population. There are many very popular poets who use this medium to spread their religious faith. Among the most notable is Bob Dylan. Dylan has been a poet of spirituality in his song since he began having his albums published. The obvious intent of his poetry in song has only recently been recognized by the general public. Many of the uninstitutionalized religious or spiritual persons have realized this since his beginning, and this has been one reason for his great popularity.

A characteristic of Dylan's music has been its emphasis upon unshackling the individual's mind and heart. The interesting aspect of Dylan and his music is that his themes have been constant: (1) An undefinable force in life, (2) Jesus as the core of history, and (3) Justice. But when Dylan stopped being subtle and vague about his religious convictions and named Jesus as his savior, his music public became irritated and critical of his religious

¹ Gallup and Poling, p. 130.

² Bob Dylan, Saved (New York: Columbia Records, 1982)

fervor.

Jackson Browne is a songwriter/singer/and prophet of note who conceptualized the Spirit in an unsubordinated way by calling it a force in his song, "Fuse." 1

There are obviously many poets who express themselves in song whose content is spiritual. These albums seldom make the top ten list, but they sell millions of copies. The Word is communicated in this unchurched world through song, and the images of God are realized through the metaphors of poetry, as they have been for thousands of years since Moses

We turn to music in times of trouble, sorrow, and grief; and modern men and women, like ancient believers, can turn no deeper than to the music of the soul. The Christian community is the source and inspiration of that musical experience. 2

Whether persons are churchd or unchurchd, for those who seek a spiritual way of life, music is a central part of that life. The image of God of this group of unchurchd and even churchd who depend primarily on song for their inspiration develop their own conception of God.

There are many persons who do not like the radio rock and so purchase their own music. Studs Terkel says in his book, Talking to Myself: A Memoir of My Times, that he thought he knew all the talent because for years he had hosted a popular jazz radio show in the Chicago area. How-

1

Jackson Browne, "Fuse," on The Pretender (Los Angeles: Electra/Asylum/Nonsuch Records, 1976)

2

Gallup and Poling, p. 128.

ever, a friend asked him to listen to a gospel singer who had recorded an album on the Apollo label. On it there was a song, "Move On Up a Little Higher" that builds and builds, and he found that she lives there in Chicago. Terkel began to visit the church where she was singing, the Greater Salem

More than two million people, way more, have put out hard-gotten cash for 'Move On Up a Little Higher.' In scores of thousands of homes, among the devout and God-fearing, oh yeah, and in taverns and pool parlors, too. Again and again and again, this record is played on phonographs and jukeboxes. The grooves are worn deep and the needles are dulled, but they keep on listening, through scratch and static, to this voice. ¹

Spirituality is not confined to the institution of the church. It is apparent that many who are unchurched receive spiritual instruction and nurture from "secular" music.

All of this new music proclaiming spirituality in the language of the people is found in album shops, while in the church we often stay tied to classical music with poetry in German or Latin. We in the church may not use updated enough musical poetry to arouse some of the unchurched population who are seeking a spiritual message in a language that is spoken "plain," as John Wesley might put it.

There are many expressions of spirituality in everyday life and many of these are found in the poetry of song.

The church may not be affording people the chance to

¹
Studs Terkel, Talking to Myself: A Memoir of My Times (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), pp. 260-261.

participate fully in singing in church while other opportunities in our society are also dwindling. If this is true, as a church we are missing an opportunity in singing to lead people through a type of education of theology.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A sampling of three populations of persons with regard to use of God images in corporate worship and/or private prayer, indicates significant differences. Those attending church worship services with some regularity perceive of God as either an Almighty Deity or as a Loving Father for an image of God in worship. However, in private this churched population reported that they use an image of God as Spirit. Nonchurched respondents characteristically perceive of God as Spirit. Seminarians, i.e. theological students, offered a variety of symbols by which they think of and address deity, including Spirit.

The apparent preference among the nonchurched and student populations for the Spirit image corresponds to findings of the popular Gallup and Poling surveys of religion in the United States. There appears to be a trend toward a need for and groping after spiritual development. It can be conjectured that Spirit as God symbol may serve to encourage this trend with the possible return to church participation by the unchurched.

Three theologians were selected for a disciplined interpretation of God as Spirit. Theologians Lampe, Pittenger and Moltmann were treated comparatively, all affirming the significance of the third person of the trinity for spiritual development. They differed as follows: Lampe

indicates a preference for imaging each person of the trinity as Spirit, the Creator, as Spirit; the Christ as Spirit; and of course the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God. It would unify a concept of God while removing some of the ancient problems in Christianity that have never been solved. The principle problem being the justification for the trinity in the face of an intended monotheism.

The theologian, Moltmann, has such a strong Christology that he does not appear willing to accept the image of even the Holy Spirit as spirit. He indicates a preference for the Church to assume the residence for the Holy Spirit. In addition, he does not give the Holy Spirit a fully hypostisized place in the trinity.

Pittenger, the process theologian, has a strong image of God as Spirit, but is not willing to go as far as Lampe in his imaging of God as Spirit. He places the Holy Spirit as a fully hypostisized person of the trinity, and further gives the Spirit powers that we ought not to judge. The Spirit to Pittenger works both within and without of the institution of the church.

The three theologians concurred that fresh emphasis upon God as Holy Spirit is called for in the life of the Christian community.

It is the writer's conviction that God as Spirit requires new emphasis in theological education and in worship and educational offerings in the local churches. Church leadership toward this end, of course, will begin with the

pastors. Music, liturgy and prayer will use the Spirit symbol. Preaching, both as a tool for teaching and as a demonstration of spirit-filled language and inspiration, will aid in the learning of a more congruent inner spirituality and one that is practiced in worship services.

Educational programs will offer opportunity for lay persons to review and reflect upon their religious experience, allowing for individual preference of God talk while encouraging them to find new meaning in Spirit and its importance for continued faith development.

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